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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the turnover of principals in the Chicago (Illinois) Public Schools since the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act (CSRA) of 1989, and analyzes racial patterns in the recent retention of principals by Local School Councils (LSCs). The following key conclusions are reported: (1) a high percentage of principalships (about 30 percent) have turned over since the passage of the CSRA; (2) the turnover is expected to rise to between 40 and 50 percent by 1991; (3) all principals will be operating under 4-year performance contracts by 1991; (4) white principals were extremely likely to be retained regardless of the racial composition of the LSC; (5) no strong relationship could be established between an LSC's retention decision and the principal's race; (6) both the percentage of Hispanic principals systemwide and the retention rate for Hispanic principals were very low; and (7) the central school administration does not give LSCs or principals adequate assistance with the selection process. Recommendations for improving communications and the recruitment process are suggested. Statistical data are presented on 11 tables. The following materials are appended: (1) a list of eight references; (2) supplementary statistical data on six tables; (3) a discussion of the method used to test for statistical significance; and (4) a statement verifying the appropriateness of the research methodology and the accuracy of the findings. (FMW)

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Chicago Principals: Changing of the Guard

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A Research Analysis

Designs for Change
March 1990

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Summary: Key Findings and Recommendations

This study was carried out to systematically analyze:

- The extent of principal turnover since the time that the school reform law was initially passed.
- Patterns in the recent decisions of Local School Councils about whether to retain their principals. Factors studied included: (1) the race of the principal, (2) majority race of the Local School Council, and (3) whether the principal was an "interim" or "assigned" principal.

This analysis is the first comprehensive research study that has been carried out since the principal selection process began. It was carried out to investigate, among other issues, claims that there was a pattern of racial discrimination against white principals in the selection process.

The study employed comprehensive data about the race of principals and racial composition of Local School Councils that has not previously been available, and was carried out consistent with generally accepted research methods. (A statement indicating the appropriateness of the methods and accuracy of the findings, prepared by Professor Herbert Walberg of the University of Illinois at Chicago, is attached.)

Key Points about the Principal Selection Process

In reviewing these findings, the following key points about the basis for the principal selection process should be kept in mind:

- The Chicago School Reform Act was originally passed because the level of student performance in Chicago's public schools was intolerable, insufficient to insure the city's economic survival. Parents, business leaders, neighborhood leaders, educators, and the Illinois General Assembly concluded that basic changes were needed.
- Educational research indicates that strong, effective principals are perhaps the single most important element in bringing urban schools up to acceptable levels of performance. Good principals are key to achieving high student achievement in Chicago.
- The laws and policies governing principal selection and retention in Chicago before reform drastically limited the number of individuals who could become Chicago principals, insured that almost all of them came from within the school system, and

awarded them lifetime tenure after a three-year probationary period. These practices differed sharply from the practices of many successful school districts in the Chicago metropolitan area, where good principals are sought aggressively from across the country and where principals do not have lifetime tenure.

- Having determined that principals must be much more accountable if the Chicago school system was to improve, the reform movement successfully pressed the Illinois General Assembly for the elimination of special Chicago restrictions on principal certification and for the abolition of principal tenure. Instead, principals are now hired on four-year performance contracts by Local School Councils, and any person who holds a state of Illinois principal's certificate is eligible to apply, opening up the process to thousands of potential applicants.

- Under the new system, the obligation of the Local School Council is to select the best possible principal for their school, comparing their present principal with other candidates from across the country.

Key Findings: The Extent of Principal Turnover

The research team analyzed the overall turnover in principalships from July 1988 (when the reform law was initially passed) to March 7, 1990.

- The turnover of school principals during the period of school reform transition is strongly influenced by the age distribution of Chicago school principals, a high percentage of whom are close to retirement age. In the 1988-89 school year, **72% of Chicago principals were age 50 or older and 50% of Chicago principals were age 55 or older.**

- This analysis indicates a **major turnover in principalshi**over that period. When the current round of principal selection has been con.ed, between **28% and 32% of all principals will be new principals** as ompared with July 1988. See Table 1.

- All of these new principals (as well as previous principals who have been retained in the current round of principal selection) will be operating under four-year performance contracts, rather than being guaranteed lifetime tenure.

- Further, a substantial number of additional principalships will turn over when the second half of schools make their principal decisions next spring, and as principals continue to retire. Thus, a conservative estimate is that total principal turnover by April 15, 1991 will be in the range of **40% to 50%**.

Findings: Patterns in Recent LSC Decision Making

The following are key findings from the analysis of statistically significant patterns in recent LSC decision making:

- **Overall, a high percentage of principals were retained.** 82% of all principals up for consideration were retained. Of the 276 schools making a decision, 226 renewed their principal and 50 did not.

- **The strongest predictor of whether or not a principal was retained was whether or not the principal was "assigned" or "interim."** 89% of all assigned principals (principals who had previously achieved permanent appointment to a school) were retained, while only 68% of all interim principals were retained. See Table 3.

- **African-American and white principals had almost identical chances of being retained across all schools, while Hispanic principals had a significantly smaller chance of being retained.** 88% of African-American principals overall and 85% of white principals overall were retained, while only 50% of Hispanic principals overall were retained. See Table 4.

- **The lower rate of retention for Hispanic principals is associated largely, but not entirely, with the fact that 81% of Hispanic principals up for retention were interim principals.** Of the 32 Hispanic principals who were up for retention, only six Hispanics were assigned principals, while 26 Hispanics were interim principals. See Table 5. However, within both the interim and assigned categories, Hispanic principals were less likely to be retained than African-American and white principals.

- **LSCs that are majority African-American, racially-mixed, or majority Hispanic were highly likely to renew the contracts of white principals.** White principals with majority Hispanic and with racially-mixed LSCs were retained at rates above the systemwide average retention rate of 82%, and white principals with majority African-American LSCs were retained at a 78% rate, very close to the systemwide average. **The charge that there was a pattern of discrimination against white principals is completely unsupported by the data.**

- **There was not a statistically significant overall tendency for LSCs with a given racial composition to retain or not retain principals of a given race.** For example, the highest rate of principal retention for the entire school system was in three schools with majority Hispanic LSCs that all retained African-American principals. Further, the analysis indicates that other LSCs whose racial majority differed from the race of the principal had a high likelihood of retaining their principal, a likelihood that was above or very close to the systemwide average; these included predominantly African-American and predominantly Hispanic LSCs that retained white principals, and racially-mixed LSCs that retained white and black principals.

- The relationship between principal race, majority LSC race, and retention of the principal was also analyzed in a somewhat different way. **There was a moderate, but statistically significant tendency, for schools with a majority of African-Americans, Hispanics, or whites to retain a principal of the same race, when compared simply with the probability that an LSC would retain a principal of a different race.** See Table 7. Typically, the highest probability of a black, white, or Hispanic principal being retained was in a school where the majority of the LSC were of the principal's own race.

- **The statistical significance of the tendency of LSCs to retain principals of the same race is weaker than the impact of the two other statistically significant factors discussed above: (1) assigned or interim status of the principal, and (2) whether or not the principal was Hispanic, regardless of the majority race of the LSC.**

- **In three predominantly Hispanic schools where there has been sustained controversy about the LSC's decision not to retain a white principal, educational achievement data concerning the school indicates a pattern of long-term educational failure.**

Key Recommendations

Several key conclusions of this research analysis provide good news about Chicago school reform:

- First, a high percentage of principalships (about 30%) have turned over since the time that the law was first passed, and the turnover will rise to between 40% and 50% by April 1991. By that point, all principals will be operating under four-year performance contracts, and at least 200 will be new principals.

- Second, contrary to highly publicized charges, white principals were extremely likely to be retained in principalships, regardless of the racial composition of their LSC. Nor was there a strong statistical pattern of LSCs retaining or not retaining principals based on race. Given the long history of racially-based living and voting patterns in Chicago, **this result is remarkable**.

However, other study results raise cause for concern, especially **the small system-wide percentage of Hispanic principals currently in the system, coupled with the low rates at which Hispanic principals were retained in the selection process.**

Study results raise additional concerns when they are viewed in light of the central administration's continuing failure to assist Local School Councils and principals with the selection process, including:

- The failure to give sufficient notice to LSCs concerning deadlines and to clarify and publicize the difference between mandatory rules and advisory guidelines.

- The failure to provide LSCs with accurate information about interested principal candidates from inside and outside the system.

- The failure to advertise locally and nationally for principal candidates and to provide accurate information to those candidates seeking information from the central administration and asking that their credentials be circulated to LSCs.

- The failure to play a part, in combination with independent groups, in providing effective training for LSCs about principal selection.

Study results indicate that, overall, LSCs are committed to judge candidates based on qualifications, not on race. And it is also clear that hundreds of qualified men and women from a full range of racial and ethnic backgrounds wish to seek these principalships in the new school system. Based on study results, we make the following recommendations:

- Opponents of school reform have repeatedly used inflammatory charges of racism in the effort to derail the reform process. The media and public officials should require documentation of such charges before they disseminate them widely and use them as a basis for policy-making. Further, the media and public officials should examine facts about the educational quality of particular schools whose principals charge that they are being dismissed because of race.

- The Interim Board, General Superintendent, and Office of Human Resources of the Board of Education must be held accountable for an ongoing local and national recruiting effort to identify a diverse pool of principal candidates. As these candidates are identified, the central administration must develop effective ways to make every LSC aware of qualified candidates who are from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Given study results, an especially strong effort must be made to recruit Hispanic candidates.

- The Interim Board and General Superintendent must provide sufficient notice of deadlines and make a clear distinction between mandatory rules and advisory guidelines. As part of the Alliance for Better Chicago Schools, Designs for Change supports a May 15 deadline for the next two important LSC activities: completion of the school improvement plan and of the school-based budget. And these deadlines must be announced by April 1.

1. How the Chicago Reform Law Changes the Principalship

Educational research has consistently indicated that urban schools with good academic achievement have principals who are strong educational leaders. Further, this research indicates the qualities of these effective principals; they are principals who, for example, act on a clear plan for academic improvement, visit teachers classrooms frequently and assist them in improving their performance, establish a system of firm but fair student discipline, and welcome parental involvement in the school.[1] The principal is the single person who can make the most difference in bringing about the improved quality of education that Chicago and other big cities are seeking.

Because of the importance of the school principal in determining educational quality, the school reform coalition made a number of basic changes in the legal status of principals. The Chicago Public Schools are governed by a separate section of the state law that applies only to Chicago and not to other school districts. Prior to the passage of the Chicago School Reform Act in 1989, this section of the state law granted Chicago's principals lifetime tenure, after a three-year probationary period as a principal.[2] Further, once a principal received tenure, he or she could only be removed "for cause."[3] Given the way that "cause" was defined in the law and as a result of court cases, it was virtually impossible to remove a tenured principal. The research team can find no instance in the last decade in which a principal was dismissed for providing inadequate educational leadership. The few dismissals that have taken place have come when the principal was convicted of a serious criminal offense; for example, James Moffett lost his tenure as a principal after having been convicted on 24 felony counts of sexual abuse of children.

Chicago was the only school district in the state in which principals were guaranteed tenure through state law. In the nearly 1,000 other school districts, state law requires only that principals must be informed by April 1 that they will not have the position renewed for the next year. They must also be given a reason for non-renewal; however, this reason is not a basis for contesting non-renewal, unless it indicates a violation of some other statute, such as anti-discrimination laws.[4]

Besides lifetime tenure, a second major influence shaping the principalship in Chicago was the special examination process that was a prerequisite for becoming a Chicago principal (popularly called "the principals exam"). Prior to the school reform law, the school system would administer these examinations every three or four years and create a limited pool of eligible principals. It was then necessary that all these eligible principals be placed in schools before a new pool was created. In 1983, a pool of 217 principals was created. And in 1987, a pool of approximately 500 was created.[5] While Local School Improvement Councils were given the right to interview candidates for an open principalship at their school under the old system, they had to choose from the individuals who had navigated the principals' exam process. And many District Superintendents and central administration staff attempted to steer certain principal candidates toward certain schools and discourage others from applying.

The principals exam has historically been a subject of major controversy. Questions on the written exam were based on responses given by long-time Chicago principals; the correct answers were often unclear. Study guides were provided to prospective candidates to help them prepare for the exam. At each recent examination,

some candidates have charged that other candidates were given extra information about the correct answers.

One effect of the principals exam process was to make it almost impossible for individuals from outside the school system to become Chicago principals. Virtually every principal in Chicago came up through the Chicago ranks. This pattern is in marked contrast to many well-regarded school districts in the metropolitan area that have no such examination process and that advertise nationally for open principal positions.

The school reform law made a number of basic changes in the manner in which principals were to be selected. Below, we summarize the nature of these changes and the rationale for each that was advanced in its support:

- Principal tenure is abolished. Each principal must be selected by a Local School Council and signed to a four-year performance contract. Rationale: Principals are the key managers in the school system. They must be held accountable for their performance if the schools are going to improve. Local School Councils should have the right to select a principal who fits their priorities for improvement. This change places the principal in the same position as a school superintendent in a small school district elsewhere in Illinois. (750 Illinois school districts are smaller than the average Chicago high school.)

- The Chicago school system cannot employ any additional requirement for principal eligibility, except for Illinois state certification as a principal. Rationale: This change expands the pool of eligible candidates from the few hundred who were able to navigate the old principals exam procedure to 9,000 candidates in Illinois and thousands of others from across the country.[6] It is essential that the Local School Councils have a wide range of candidates from which to choose.

- Principals cannot be removed during the term of their contract, except "for cause." Rationale: It should be difficult to remove principals during the terms of their contract, so that they will have the flexibility to make difficult decisions.

- Half the contracts of current principals expire on June 30, 1990. The other half expire on June 30, 1991. Rationale: Not all principalships should be open at once.

- Principals are given increased authority to select and remove educational staff, increased authority over engineering and food service personnel, and increased control over their school's learning program. Rationale: Additional accountability should be matched with additional authority.

This research study reviews data about the process of change in the principalship that has taken place since the law was first passed by the Illinois General Assembly in June 1988.

2. Principal Turnover from July 1988 through March 1990

The process of principal selection in one-half of Chicago's schools, which has recently received so much publicity, is one piece of a larger change in the principal work force that has taken place since the reform law was passed. We carried out a statistical analysis of this change, from July 1988 (the point at which the school reform law first passed), to the present.

Recent Events Shaping the Results

To understand these data, it is important to understand the age composition of the principal workforce. Data from the Illinois State Board of Education indicate that 72% of Chicago principals are 50 or older and 50% are age 55 or older.[7] Thus, the school reform law was passed at a time when many Chicago principals were retiring or on the verge of retirement. Since July 1988, some principals have retired simply because they had reached the age at which they had previously planned to retire, while others either resigned or retired early, because they did not want to function in the restructured principal's role.

When a principal resigns, the central administration has historically appointed an interim principal. Up to summer 1989, tenured principals who resigned were typically replaced first with an interim principal and then with a new "assigned" principal, chosen with input from the old Local School Improvement Council.

In September, 1989, the Interim Board of Education selected those principals whose contracts would be up for review in spring 1990 (the "first group") and those that would be up for review in June 1991 (the "second group"). They placed all schools with interim principals in the first group, along with any principal who volunteered to be placed in the first group. The rest of those in the first and second groups were selected by lot. The Interim Board took another step that affected the principalship in June, 1989, when 23 schools that had previously been considered branches of other schools (and thus shared a principal with another school) were classified as separate schools with their own LSC and given the right to hire a principal.

Beginning in August 1989, the Interim Board placed only interim principals in schools where the principal resigned, allowing these interim principals to remain until the Local School Council had a chance to decide whether they wanted to keep the interim principal for a four-year performance contract or open up the selection process in their

school. In some instances, the interim principal was assigned by the central administration without consultation with the Local School Council. In other cases, the LSC had a role in selecting their interim principal.

Local School Councils in the first principal selection group were required by the reform law to negotiate a four-year performance contract with either their current principal or a new principal by April 15, 1990. The reform coalition and legislators who pushed for the law's passage saw the LSC's obligation as one of selecting the best possible principal for their school, whether that person was the current principal or another individual. Thus, they envisioned that many schools would choose to simultaneously consider both their current principal and other principal candidates who applied.

However, in response to requests from current principals, the Interim Board asked LSCs to notify their current principal by February 28 about whether or not they wished to retain him or her, and this Interim Board resolution was translated into a set of principal selection guidelines released by the General Superintendent on January 31, 1990. Thus, LSCs were told that they had only 28 days to review their current principal and decide whether or not to keep him or her.

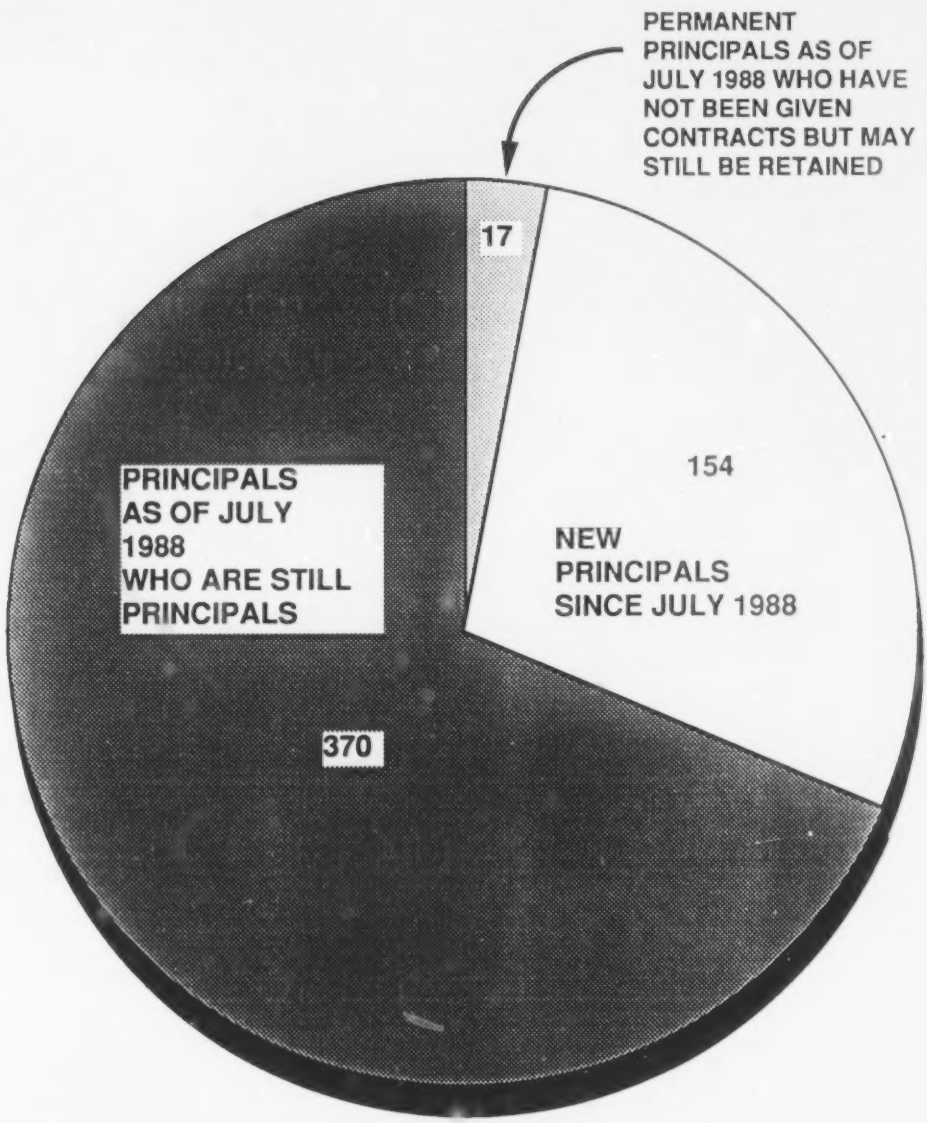
Although the General Superintendent later stated that this deadline was only advisory, most LSCs took it as a mandate and voted either to retain or not retain their current principal by the deadline. As noted earlier, the LSC is not under an obligation to prove that the current principal is incompetent in order to search for another principal. The obligation of LSC members is to identify a person who they feel will be best suited to carry out their priorities for school improvement. Nor does the failure of the LSC to renew a principal's contract by February 28 mean that that individual can't apply for the principalship. A number of LSCs did not vote to retain their principal because they wanted to see who else might be available, in line with the original intent of the law.

Findings: The Extent of Principal Turnover

Table 1 indicates the overall turnover in principalships from July 1988 to March 7, 1990:

- 370 principals who were in place as of July 1988 were still in place as of March 7, 1990.
- 154 current principals (28% of the total number of principals) were new to the job since July 1988.
- 17 additional tenured principals who had been on the job in July 1988 had not been retained by their Local School Council as of March 7, although it is possible that some of them will still be retained.

Table 1. Turnover in Principalships from July 1988 to March 7, 1990


PERMANENT PRINCIPALS AS OF JULY 1988 WHO HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN CONTRACTS BUT MAY STILL BE RETAINED
17
154
NEW PRINCIPALS SINCE JULY 1988
PRINCIPALS AS OF JULY 1988 WHO ARE STILL PRINCIPALS
370

- Thus, when the current round of principal selection has been completed, between 28% and 31% of all principals will be new principals since July 1988.

- Further, a substantial number of additional principalships will turn over when the second half of schools make their principal decisions next spring, and as principals continue to retire. Thus, a conservative estimate is that total principal turnover by April 15, 1991 will be in the range of 40% to 50%.

The new principals indicated in Table 1 fall into several categories:

- 59 "assigned" principals who were appointed after July 1988 and have been retained by their LSC.

- 62 interim principals who were retained by their LSC, but are new to the job.

- 3 assigned principals appointed after July 1988 and 30 interim principals, who were not retained by March 7, 1990. Whether they are ultimately retained or not, there will be a changeover in the principalship of these schools, as compared with July 1988.

When one focuses then on the larger process of change that has taken place since the reform law was passed, there has been a dramatic infusion of new principals into Chicago's principalships, and this changing of the guard will continue. Further, these new principals will serve under four-year performance contracts and will not have lifetime tenure.

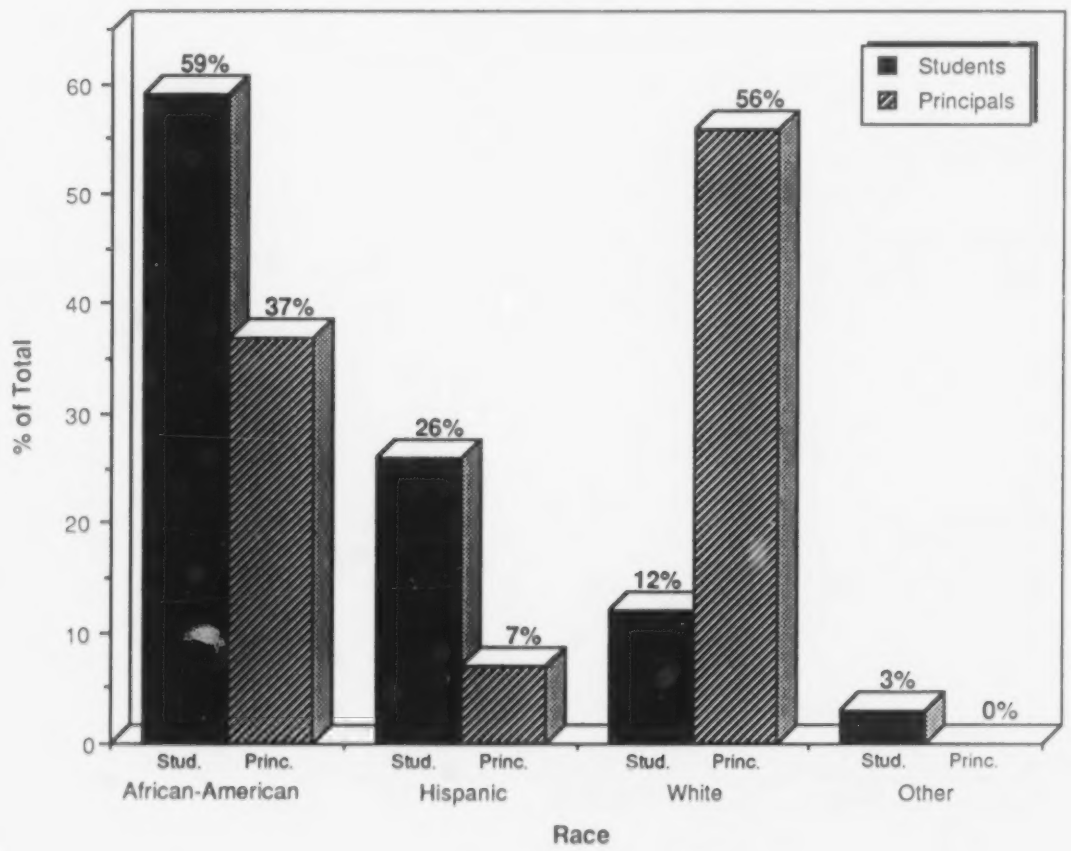
3. Patterns in Recent LSC Decision Making

Public attention has been focused in the past month on the decisions made by those LSCs in the first principal selection group who have decided whether or not to retain their current principal. This recent controversy, exemplified by the newspaper headline appearing in the March 1, 1990 *Chicago Sun-Times*—"Reform or Racism?"—focused attention on the allegations of several white principals that their contracts had not been renewed for racial reasons. The issue of the racial patterns in principal selection should be viewed in light of the racial composition of the school system principalships, as compared with the racial and ethnic composition of the students. As indicated in Table 2:

- 59% of students in the school system were African-American, as compared with 37% of the principals.

- 26% of the students in the school system were Hispanic, as compared with 7% of the principals.

Table 2. Systemwide Percentage of Principals by Race Compared with Systemwide Percentage of Students by Race



- 12% of the students in the school system were white, as compared with 56% of the principals.
- 3% of the students in the school system were Asian, as compared with 0.2% of the principals. (0.2% appears as 0% in Table 2 because of rounding to nearest percent).

If the percentage of African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and other non-white principals is going to increase over time, some schools now headed by white principals will be replaced by African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and other non-white principals (either when principals resign or when their contracts are not renewed).

Three Factors Analyzed

DFC obtained comprehensive data to analyze the impact of three factors on whether or not the Local School Councils decided by March 7 to renew the contract of their principal:

- The principal's status as either an "assigned" or "interim" principal.
- The race or ethnicity of the principal (African-American, Hispanic, White, or Asian). (The one Asian principal was not included in the analysis.)
- The majority race or ethnicity of the ten elected members of Local School Council (African-American, Hispanic, White, or Mixed.)

The analysis determined whether any of these factors, alone or in combination, had a statistically significant association with the decision to renew or not renew the principal's contract. The statistical method employed is called logit analysis.[8] The appropriateness of the analysis and of the conclusions that were drawn based on the analysis are attested to by an attached statement in Appendix C by Professor Herbert Walberg, an internationally recognized educational researcher from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Details of the statistical analysis, including sources of the data employed, are discussed in Appendix B.

Data about the racial composition of the Local School Councils, which has not previously been available, are the best indicator of whether there are racial patterns in the selection process. In this analysis, an LSC was considered "Majority African-American" if 6 of its 10 elected members (excluding the principal) were African-American, "Majority Hispanic" if 6 of its 10 members were Hispanic, "Majority White" if 6 of its 10 members were white, and "Mixed" if fewer than six members were from one racial or ethnic group.

The results of this data analysis are presented in Tables 3 through 7, and in supplementary Tables A-1 through A- 3.

As noted above, information about the race of LSC members is the best data to use in analyzing possible racial patterns in decision making, although the racial composition of

the student body can also be used as a less precise indicator. Since data about the racial composition of the LSCs was not available for 19 of the 276 LSCs making a principal selection decision, we conducted a second analysis of the selection process using data about the racial composition of the student body in all 276 schools making a selection decision. The results of this analysis did not differ from the results of the analysis using LSC composition, and these results are not reported here.

In reviewing these analyses, a critical point must be kept in mind. In those schools that did not renew their principal as of March 7, the race of the person who will fill this spot is not yet determined. For example, an African-American principal with a majority white LSC who was not offered a contract as of March 7 might still be offered a contract, or another African-American principal might be hired. Thus, the racial patterns in principal selection cannot be finally analyzed until the process is finished.

Findings

Below, we present and discuss a set of key conclusions from the main analysis that was carried out. In reviewing data tables, it is critical to understand that some cells have very few cases in them, and thus the retention percentages in them are affected by small changes in the number of principals retained. Cells that are based on fewer than ten cases are indicated by an asterisk (*), and those that are based on fewer than five cases are indicated by a double asterisk (**)

Finding. A high percentage of principals overall were retained. 82% of all principals up for consideration were retained. Of the 276 schools making a decision, 226 renewed their principal and 50 did not.

Finding. The strongest predictor of whether or not a principal was retained was whether or not the principal was "assigned" or "interim". As Table 3 indicates, 89% of all assigned principals were retained, while 68% of all interim principals were retained.

Finding. Black and white principals had about equal chances of being retained across all schools, while Hispanic principals had a significantly smaller chance of being retained. As Table 4 indicates, 88% of African-American principals overall and 85% of white principals overall were retained, while only 50% of Hispanic principals overall were retained.

Table 3. Retention Rates for Assigned and Interim Principals

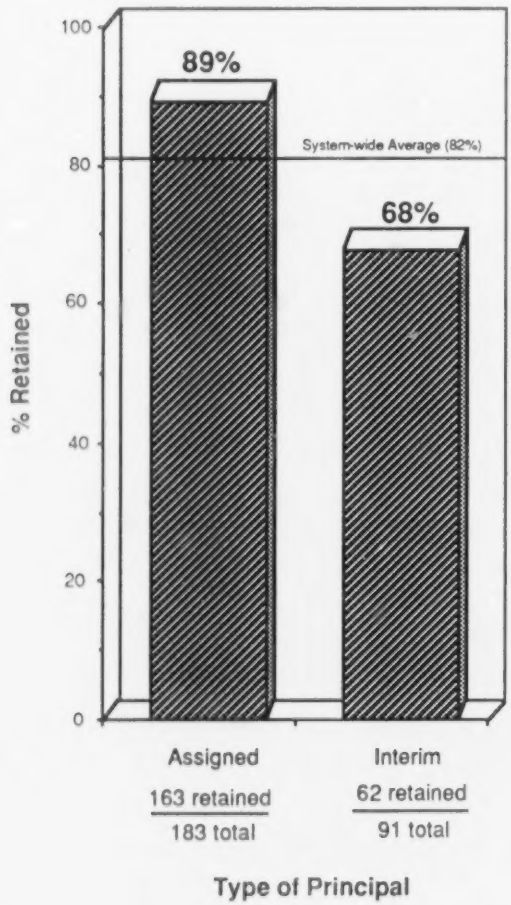
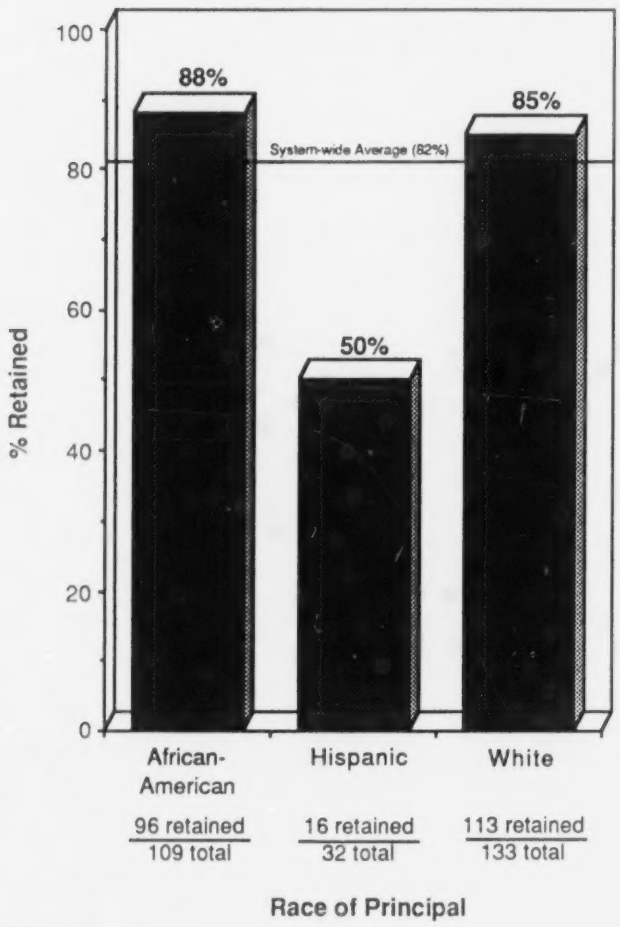


Table 4. Retention Rates for African-American, Hispanic, and White Principals



Finding. The lower rate of retention for Hispanic principals is associated largely, but not entirely, with the fact that 81% of Hispanic principals up for retention were interim principals. Of the 32 Hispanic principals who were up for retention, only six Hispanics were assigned principals, while 26 Hispanics were interim principals. This result is clear in Table 5. However, even within the interim and assigned categories, Hispanic principals were less likely to be retained than African-American and white principals (see Tables A-2 and A-3).

Finding. LSCs that are majority African-American, racially-mixed, or majority Hispanic were highly likely to renew the contracts of white principals. As Table 6 indicates, white principals with majority Hispanic and with racially-mixed LSCs were retained at rates above the systemwide average retention rate of 82% , and white principals with majority African-American LSCs were retained at a 78% rate, very close to the systemwide average. **The charge that there was a pattern of discrimination against white principals is completely unsupported by the data.**

Finding. There was not a statistically significant overall tendency for LSCs with a given racial composition to retain or not retain principals of a given race. Table 6 indicates, for example, that the highest rate of principal retention for the entire school system was in three schools with majority Hispanic LSCs that all retained African-American principals. Further, the analysis indicates that other LSCs whose racial majority differed from the race of the principal had a high likelihood of retaining their principal, a likelihood that was above or very close to the systemwide average; these included predominantly African-American and predominantly Hispanic LSCs that retained white principals, and racially-mixed LSCs that retained white and black principals.

Finding. The relationship between principal race, majority LSC race, and retention of the principal was also analyzed in a somewhat different way. **There was a moderate, but statistically significant tendency, for schools with a majority of African-Americans, Hispanics, or whites to retain a principal of the same race, when compared simply with the probability that an LSC would retain a principal of a different race.** 89% of LSCs that had principals of the same race retained them, while 76% of LSCs with principals of a different race retained them. See Table 7.

Finding: The statistical significance of the tendency of LSCs to retain principals of the same race is weaker than the impact of the two other

Table 5. Number of Interim and Assigned Hispanic Principals Considered for Retention

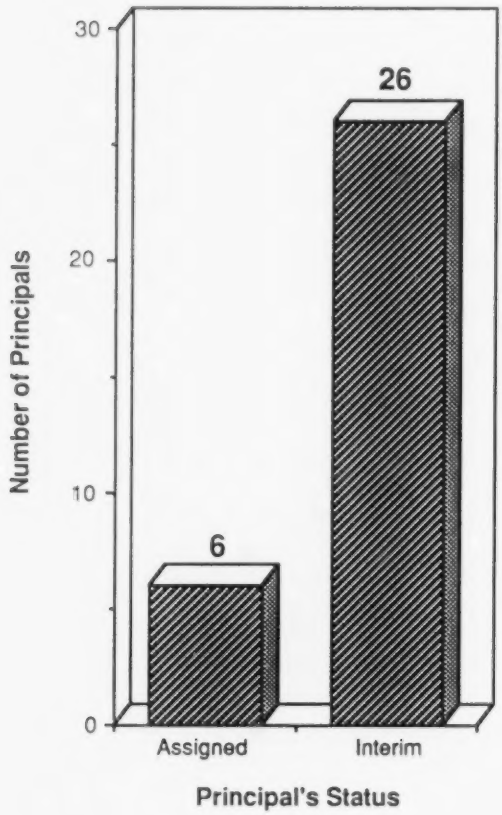
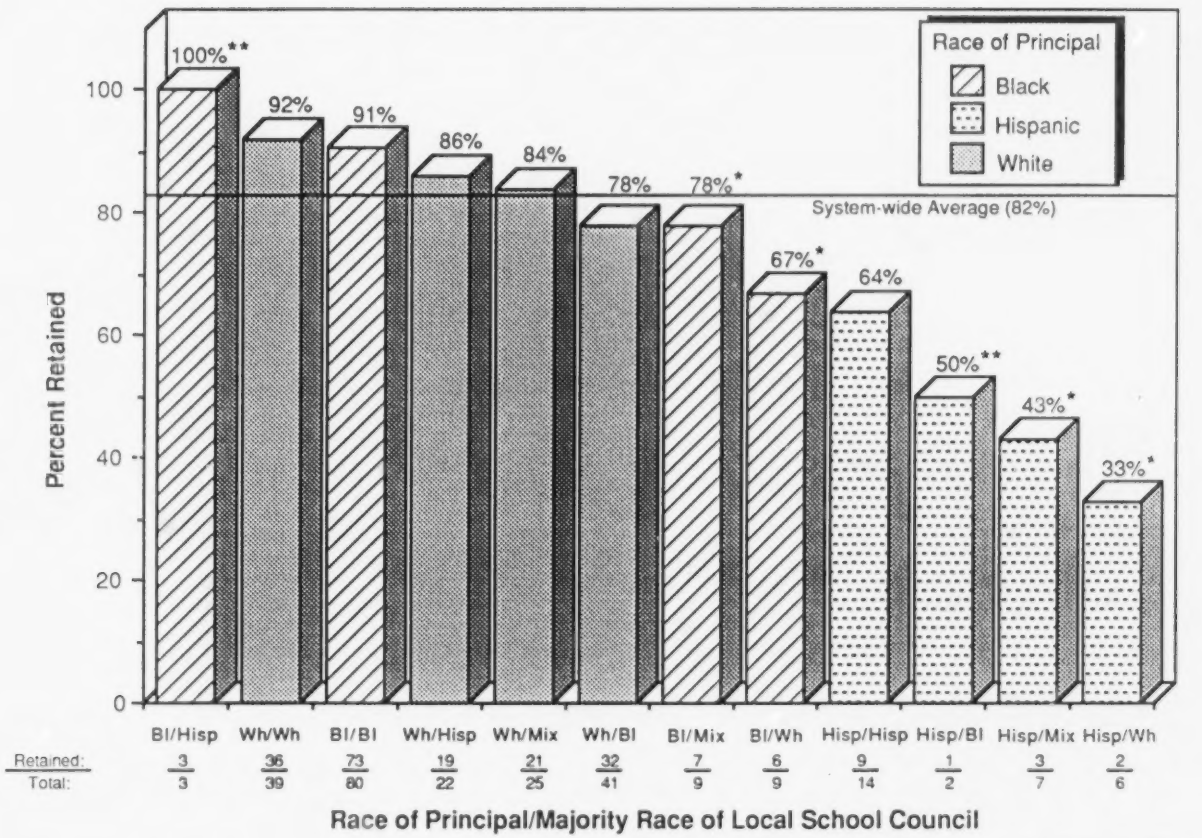
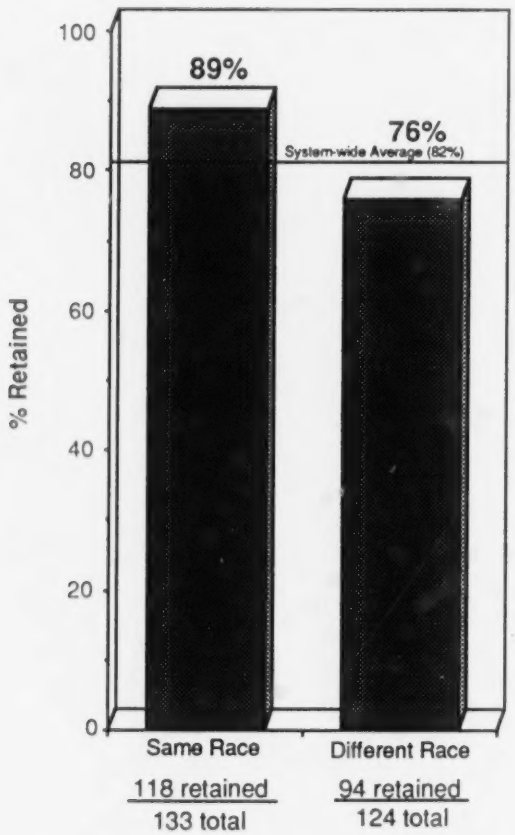


Table 6. Retention Rates for Principals by Race of Principal and Majority Race of Local School Council



* - 10 or fewer principals in this group
** - 5 or fewer principals in this group

Table 7. Retention Rates When Principal's Race Was Same versus Different from Majority Race of LSC



statistically significant factors discussed above: (1) assigned or interim status of the principal, and (2) whether or not the principal was Hispanic, regardless of the majority race of the LSC.

Examples: Educational Achievement in Schools Not Renewing Principals

As the above analysis indicates, most LSCs kept their current principals. In many cases they were keeping a principal who had only recently arrived and, in some cases, they had had an earlier role in selecting this principal. Of the 50 schools that did not renew their principals, sustained controversies extending over a period of weeks have arisen in three predominantly Hispanic schools where white principals have leveled charges of racism (Spry Elementary School, Burns Elementary School, and Wells High School). Typically absent from media coverage of these controversies has been any analysis of the educational results in these schools. In a separate document, Designs for Change has presented evidence about educational performance at these three schools. At each of these schools, the Local School Council had a substantial record of past achievement to consider, since the principal had been in place for at least ten years. The analysis of achievement at these three schools indicates results like the following:

- At Spry Elementary School, 79% of students read below the statewide average and 50% of students read in the bottom quarter, based state achievement tests. At Burns Elementary School, 69% of students read below the statewide average.

- At both Spry and Burns Elementary Schools, eighth grade achievement test results on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills over the past eight years fail to indicate any significant improvement and are far below the national average. Current results will drop by almost an additional year when more recent national norms are employed for the first time.

- At Wells High School, senior reading achievement is 25 percentile points below the national average, and has improved by less than one point a year since 1982. If this rate of improvement continues, it will take Wells High School seniors 25 years to reach the national average.

- The four-year dropout rate at Wells High School for the Class of 1986 (the most recent class for which data are available) was 55%, approximately what the dropout rate was in 1982.

- Wells High School has consistently ranked among the lowest 1% in the nation in terms of students scores on the ACT Test, the most common college entrance test used in the Midwest.

As the school reform process unfolds, we hope that the LSCs, the general public, and the media will pay more attention to such educational data. As noted earlier, it is the responsibility of the Local School Council to secure the best possible principal for their school. **The data about these three schools indicate that their Local School Councils had ample reason to search for another principal. Claims that principals are "experienced and highly effective" must be weighed against such data.**

Findings: Racial Composition of Local School Councils

The study is the first to analyze data about the racial composition of Local School Councils. Although these data in themselves are not the central focus of the current research, it is important that key patterns in these data be presented. Tables 8-11 indicate the following results:

- Parent membership on the LSCs mirrors the composition of the city-wide student enrollment fairly closely, except that white parents are somewhat overrepresented and "other" (including Asian and Native American) parents are significantly underrepresented See Table 8.
- Comparing teacher membership on the LSCs with city-wide student enrollment, African-American participation is close to the city-wide student percentage, Hispanics are significantly underrepresented, white teachers are significantly overrepresented, and others are significantly underrepresented. See Table 9.
- Comparing the community membership on the LSCs with city-wide student enrollment, African-Americans are somewhat underrepresented, Hispanics and others are significantly underrepresented, and whites are significantly overrepresented. See Table 10.
- Comparing student membership on the LSC with student city-wide enrollment, African-Americans are somewhat overrepresented, Hispanics are somewhat underrepresented, and others are significantly underrepresented. See Table 11.

Thus, these data indicate that the reform process has had significant success in creating a school-level representative structure involving 6,000 parents, community residents, teachers, principals, and students that, with the noted exceptions, comes close to reflecting the student composition of the school system.

Table 8. Systemwide Percentage of Parents on LSCs by Race Compared with Systemwide Percentage of Students by Race

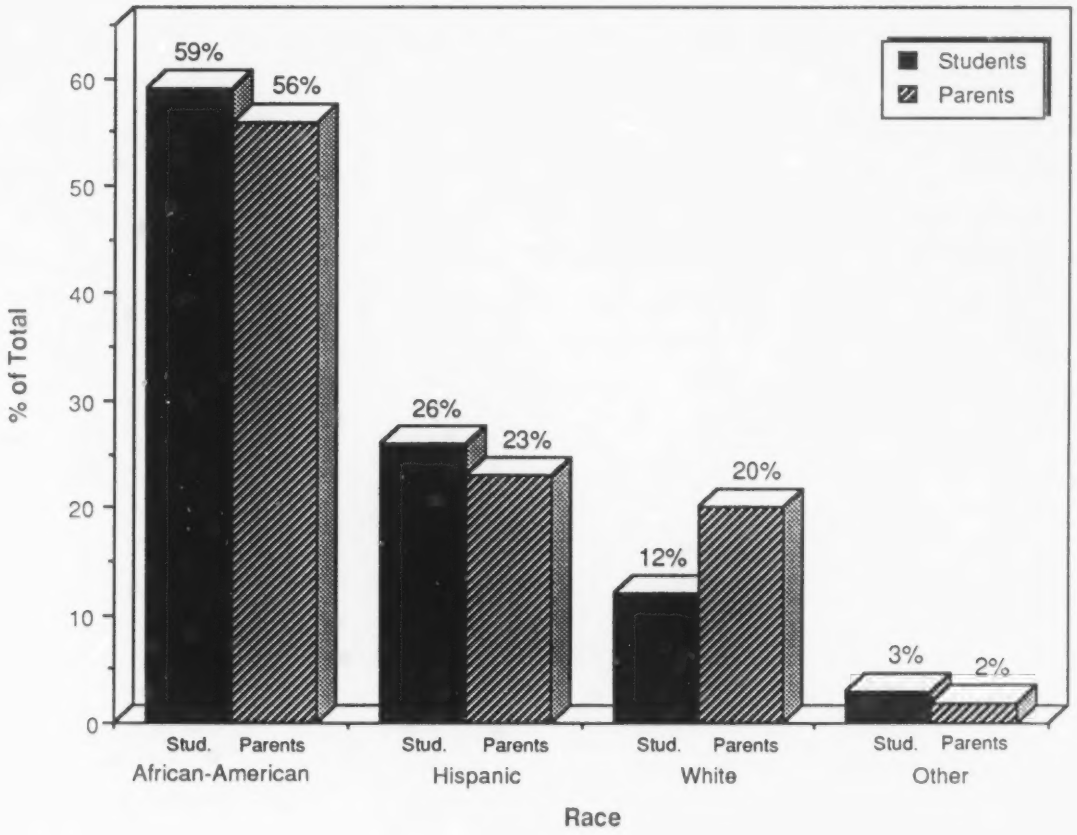


Table 9. Systemwide Percentage of Teachers on LSCs by Race Compared with Systemwide Percentage of Students by Race

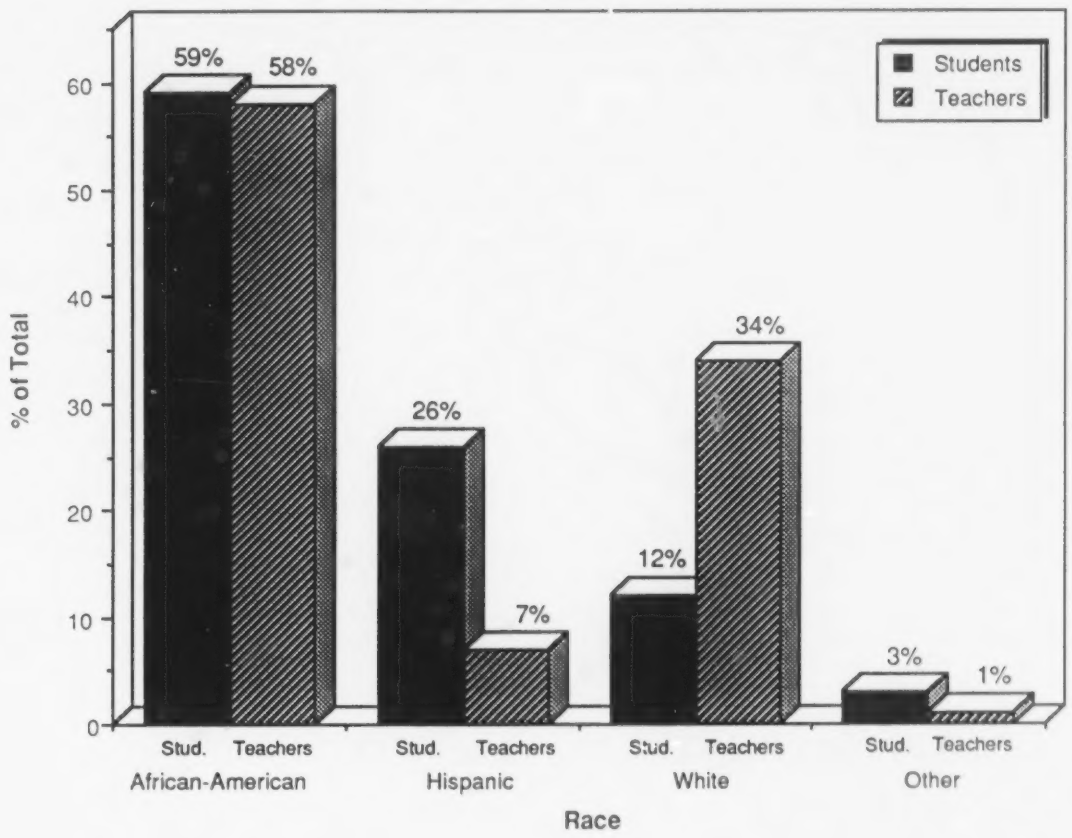


Table 10. Systemwide Percentage of Community Members on LSCs by Race Compared with Systemwide Percentage of Students by Race

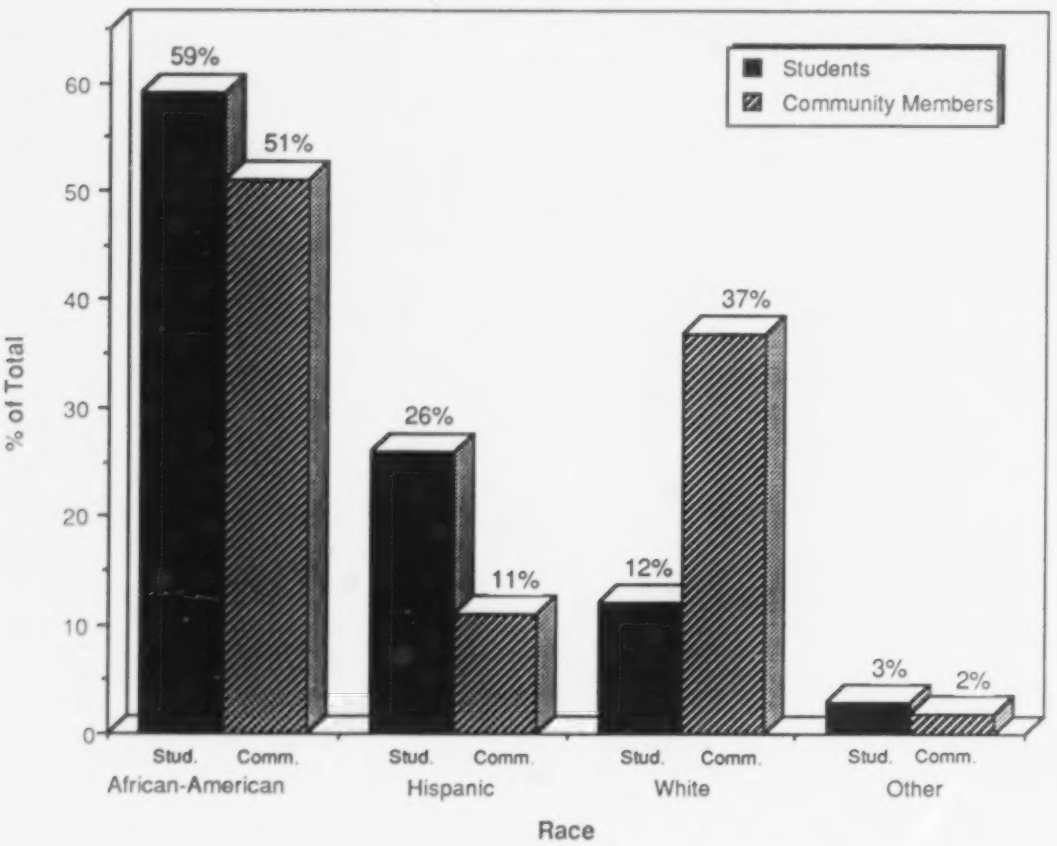
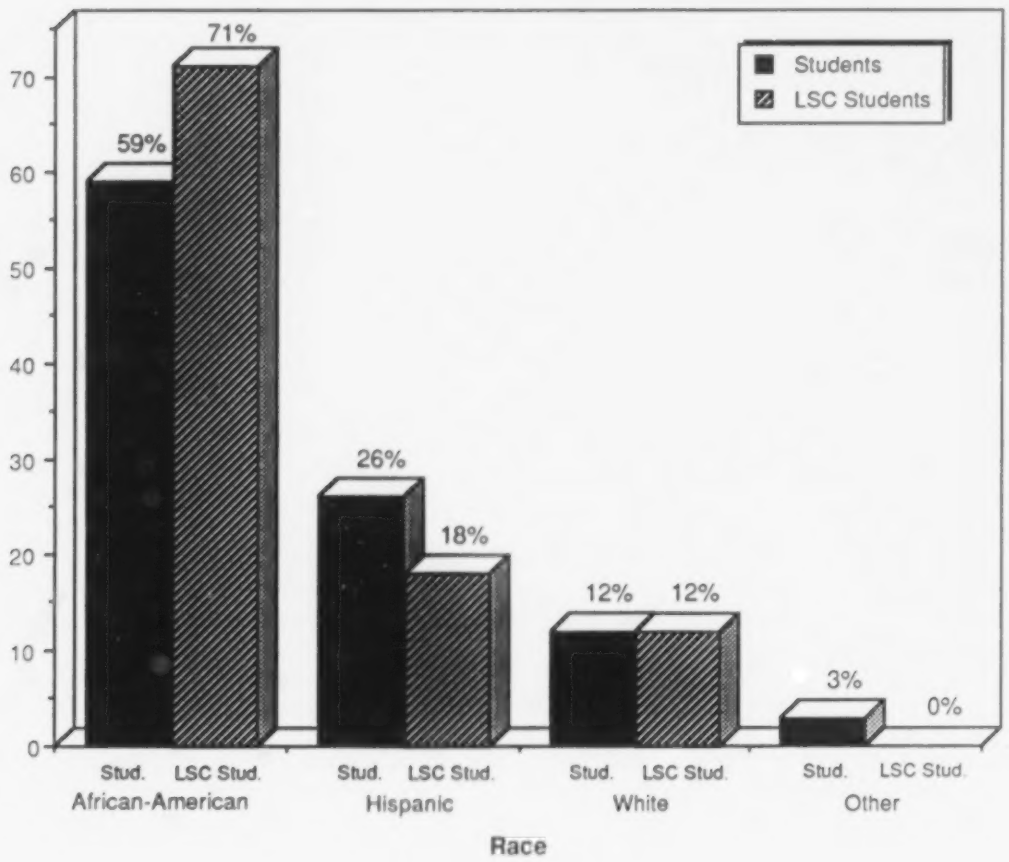


Table 11. Systemwide Percentage of Students on LSCs by Race Compared with Systemwide Percentage of Students by Race



4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Several key conclusions of this research analysis provide good news about Chicago school reform:

- First, a high percentage of principalships (about 30%) have turned over since the time that the law was first passed, and the turnover will rise to between 40% and 50% by April 1991. By that point, all principals will be operating under four-year performance contracts, and at least 200 will be new principals.

- Second, contrary to highly publicized charges, white principals were extremely likely to be retained in principalships, regardless of the racial composition of their LSC. Nor was there a strong statistical pattern of LSCs retaining or not retaining principals based on race. Given the long history of racially-based living and voting patterns in Chicago, **this result is remarkable**.

However, other study results raise cause for concern, especially **the small systemwide percentage of Hispanic principals currently in the system, coupled with the low rates at which Hispanic principals were retained in the selection process.**

Study results raise additional concerns when they are viewed in light of the central administration's continuing failure to assist Local School Councils and principals with the selection process, including:

- The failure to give sufficient notice to LSCs concerning deadlines and to clarify and publicize the difference between mandatory rules and advisory guidelines.

- The failure to provide LSCs with accurate information about interested principal candidates from inside and outside the system.

- The failure to advertise locally and nationally for principal candidates and to provide accurate information to those candidates seeking information from the central administration and asking that their credentials be circulated to LSCs.

- The failure to play a part, in combination with independent groups, in providing effective training about principal selection for LSCs.

The Alliance for Better Chicago Schools, of which Designs for Change is a member, has repeatedly asked the Interim Board, the General Superintendent, and the Office of Human Resources to launch a systematic campaign to seek qualified principals locally and nationally and an effective process for sharing information about interested

applicants with LSCs. However, as recently as last week, it was clear that none of these steps were being taken.

Study results indicate that, overall, LSCs are committed to judge candidates based on qualifications, not on race. And it is also clear that hundreds of qualified men and women from a full range of racial and ethnic backgrounds wish to seek these principalships in the new school system. Based on study results, we make the following recommendations:

- Opponents of school reform have repeatedly used inflammatory charges of racism in the effort to derail the reform process. The media and public officials should require documentation of such charges before they disseminate them widely and use them as a basis for policy-making. Further, the media and public officials should examine facts about educational quality that are relevant to the allegations that are raised.

- The Interim Board, General Superintendent, and Office of Human Resources of the Board of Education must be held accountable for an ongoing local and national recruiting effort to identify a diverse pool of principal candidates. As these candidates are identified, the central administration must develop effective ways to make every LSC aware of qualified candidates who are from a range of ethnic and racial backgrounds. Given study results, an especially strong effort must be made to recruit Hispanic candidates.

- The Interim Board and General Superintendent must provide sufficient notice of deadlines and make a clear distinction between mandatory rules and advisory guidelines. As part of the Alliance for Better Chicago Schools, Designs for Change supports a May 15 deadline for the next two important LSC activities: completion of the school improvement plan and of the school-based budget. And these deadlines must be announced by April 1.

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[1] Stewart C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith, "Effective Schools: A Review," in *The Elementary School Journal*, 83, 4:427-452 (1979); W.B. Brookover and L.W. Lezotte, *Changes in School Characteristics Coincident with Changes in Student Achievement* (East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, 1979).

[2] Illinois Revised Statutes, Chapter 122 ¶ 34-84; 1987.

[3] Illinois Revised Statutes, Chapter 122 ¶ 34-85; 1987.

[4] Illinois Revised Statutes, Chapter 122 ¶ 10-23.8b; 1987.

[5] Marge Bollack, Office of Employment Eligibility, Chicago Public Schools, interviewed May 11, 1989.

[6] Bob Brigham, Supervisor of the Certification Section, Illinois State Board of Education, interviewed May 11, 1989.

[7] Illinois State Board of Education, Teacher Service Record Analysis 1988-1989. March 24, 1989.

[8] R.D. Bock, *Multivariate Statistical Methods in Behavioral Research* (New York: McGraw Hill 1975).

Appendix A

Supplementary Data Tables

32

RATIO OF PRINCIPALS OFFERED CONTRACTS IN 1990 TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS, BY RACE OF PRINCIPAL AND MAJORITY RACE OF LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL

(For any cell top number is number of principals offered a contract, bottom number is total number of principals.)

Table A-1

MAJORITY RACE OF LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL	RACE OF PRINCIPAL: African-American	Hispanic	White	Total
African-Amer.	$\frac{73}{80} = .912$	$\frac{1}{2} = .500$	$\frac{32}{41} = .780$	$\frac{106}{123} = .862$
Hispanic	$\frac{3}{3} = 1.000$	$\frac{9}{14} = .643$	$\frac{19}{22} = .864$	$\frac{31}{39} = .795$
White	$\frac{6}{9} = .667$	$\frac{2}{6} = .333$	$\frac{36}{39} = .923$	$\frac{44}{54} = .815$
Other	$\frac{7}{9} = .778$	$\frac{3}{7} = .428$	$\frac{21}{25} = .840$	$\frac{31}{41} = .756$
Total	$\frac{89}{101} = .881$	$\frac{15}{29} = .517$	$\frac{108}{127} = .850$	$\frac{212}{257} = .825$

Source: Chicago Public Schools: Computer data sets for LSC members, principals, and principal contracts. Majority race of local school council is defined as any race to which six or more local school council members, excluding principals and students, belong; "Other" refers to all schools where no single group makes up over 50% of the LSC or where the majority race is different from those listed.

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RATIO OF PERMANENT PRINCIPALS OFFERED CONTRACTS IN 1990 TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS, BY RACE OF PRINCIPAL AND MAJORITY RACE OF LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL

(For any cell top number is number of principals offered a contract, bottom number is total number of principals.)

Table A-2

MAJORITY RACE OF LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL	RACE OF PRINCIPAL: African-American	Hispanic	White	Total
African-Amer.	53/56 = .946	No Cases	28/35 = .800	81/91 = .890
Hispanic	3/3 = 1.000	4/5 = .800	18/20 = .900	25/28 = .893
White	4/5 = .800	0/1 = 0	23/23 = 1.000	27/29 = .931
Other	6/8 = .750	No Cases	18/20 = .900	24/28 = .857
Total	66/72 = .917	4/6 = .667	87/98 = .888	157/176 = .892

Source: Chicago Public Schools: Computer data sets for LSC members, principals, and principal contracts. Majority race of local school council is defined as any race to which six or more local school council members, excluding principals and students, belong; "Other" refers to all schools where no single group makes up over 50% of the LSC or where the majority race is different from those listed.

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RATIO OF INTERIM PRINCIPALS OFFERED CONTRACTS IN 1990 TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS, BY RACE OF PRINCIPAL AND MAJORITY RACE OF LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL

(For any cell top number is number of principals offered a contract, bottom number is total number of principals.)

Table A-3

MAJORITY RACE OF LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL	RACE OF PRINCIPAL: African-American	Hispanic	White	Total
African-Amer.	20/24 = .833	1/2 = .500	4/6 = .667	25/32 = .781
Hispanic	No Cases	5/9 = .556	1/2 = .500	6/11 = .545
White	2/4 = .500	2/5 = .400	13/16 = .812	17/25 = .680
Other	1/1 = 1.000	3/7 = .428	3/5 = .600	7/13 = .538
Total	23/29 = .793	11/23 = .478	21/29 = .724	55/81 = .679

Source: Chicago Public Schools: Computer data sets for LSC members, principals, and principal contracts. Majority race of local school council is defined as any race to which six or more local school council members, excluding principals and students, belong; "Other" refers to all schools where no single group makes up over 50% of the LSC or where the majority race is different from those listed.

RATIO OF PRINCIPALS OFFERED CONTRACTS IN 1990 TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS, BY RACE OF PRINCIPAL AND MAJORITY RACE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED

(For any cell top number is number of principals offered a contract, bottom number is total number of principals.)

Table A-4

MAJORITY RACE OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL	RACE OF PRINCIPAL: African-American	Hispanic	White	Total
African-Amer.	84/92 = .913	2/4 = .500	43/54 = .796	129/150 = .860
Hispanic	4/4 = 1.000	10/19 = .526	28/32 = .875	42/55 = .764
White	3/4 = .750	1/2 = .500	13/14 = .929	17/20 = .850
Other	5/9 = .555	3/7 = .429	29/33 = .879	37/49 = .755
Total	96/109 = .881	16/32 = .500	113/133 = .850	225/274 = .821

Source: Chicago Public Schools: Computer data sets for LSC members, principals, and principal contracts; 1988-89 Racial/Ethnic Survey. Majority race of students is defined as any race to which more than 50% of the students in a given school belong; "Other" refers to all schools where no group comprises more than 50% of the enrollment or where the majority race is different from those listed.

RATIO OF PERMANENT PRINCIPALS OFFERED CONTRACTS IN 1990 TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS, BY RACE OF PRINCIPAL AND MAJORITY RACE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED

(For any cell top number is number of principals offered a contract, bottom number is total number of principals.)

Table A-5

MAJORITY RACE OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL	RACE OF PRINCIPAL: African-American	Hispanic	White	Total
African-Amer.	58/61 = .951	No Cases	37/45 = .822	95/106 = .896
Hispanic	4/4 = 1.000	4/5 = .800	26/28 = .928	34/37 = .919
White	2/2 = 1.000	No Cases	7/7 = 1.000	9/9 = 1.000
Other	4/7 = .571	0/1 = 0	21/23 = .913	25/31 = .806
Total	68/74 = .919	4/6 = .667	91/103 = .884	163/183 = .891

Source: Chicago Public Schools: Computer data sets for LSC members, principals, and principal contracts; 1988-89 Racial/Ethnic Survey. Majority race of students is defined as any race to which more than 50% of the students in a given school belong; "Other" refers to all schools where no group comprises more than 50% of the enrollment or where the majority race is different from those listed.

RATIO OF INTERIM PRINCIPALS OFFERED CONTRACTS IN 1990 TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PRINCIPALS, BY RACE OF PRINCIPAL AND MAJORITY RACE OF STUDENTS ENROLLED

(For any cell top number is number of principals offered a contract, bottom number is total number of principals.)

Table A-6

MAJORITY RACE OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL	RACE OF PRINCIPAL: African-American	Hispanic	White	Total
African-Amer.	26/31 = .839	2/4 = .500	6/9 = .667	34/44 = .773
Hispanic	No Cases	6/14 = .428	2/4 = .500	8/18 = .444
White	1/2 = .500	1/2 = .500	6/7 = .857	8/11 = .727
Other	1/2 = .500	3/6 = .500	8/10 = .800	12/18 = .667
Total	28/35 = .800	12/26 = .462	22/30 = .733	62/91 = .681

Source: Chicago Public Schools: Computer data sets for LSC members, principals, and principal contracts; 1988-89 Racial/Ethnic Survey. Majority race of students is defined as any race to which more than 50% of the students in a given school belong; "Other" refers to all schools where no group comprises more than 50% of the enrollment or where the majority race is different from those listed.

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Appendix B

Method to Test for Statistical Significance

A logit analysis was carried out, according to procedures indicate in R.D. Bock, *Multivariate Statistical Methods in Behavioral Research* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1975).

Three design factors were analyzed:

- Principal Status: Assigned or Interim
- Principal Race: African-American, Hispanic, or White
- Majority Local School Council Race: African-American, Hispanic, White, or Mixed

The dependent variable was whether or not the LSC had voted to offer their current principal a contract as of March 7, 1990.

The sources of these data and specifics about these data are as follows:

- Principal Status: Memoranda from Robert Saddler, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Reform Implementation, to Ted Kimbrough, General Superintendent, "Subject: 1990 Lottery Principals Not Receiving Principal Contract," March 6, 7, and 8, 1990.
- Principal Race: Department of Information Processing, "Local School Council Listing," Chicago Public Schools, 9 March 1990. Note: One principal is Asian. He was not considered in the analysis.
- Majority Local School Council Race: Department of Information Processing, "Local School Council Listing," Chicago Public Schools, 9 March 1990. An LSC was considered to have a majority race if 6 of its 10 elected members were of the same race, considering African-American, Hispanic, and White. Other LSCs were considered racially-mixed, and one LSC that has a majority of Asian members was included in the racially-mixed category in the analysis.

The results are presented in Table B-1. In Table B-1, the following abbreviations are used: Constant=C, Principal's Status=S, Principal's Race=PR, Majority Local School Council Race=CR

A similar analysis was carried out substituting Majority Student Race in the school for Majority Local School Council Race, with the following categories: More than 50% African-American, More than 50% Hispanic, More than 50% White, and Other. The results of this analysis are the same as the results of the analysis presented in Section 3 of this report, and they are not presented here.

Table B-1. Results of Logit Analysis

Model	Residual Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom for Residual	Component Chi-Square	Degrees of Freedom for Component	Probability Level
C	43.81	20			
C + S	27.51	19	16.30	1	p=.00005
C + PR	26.38	18	17.43	2	p=.00016
C + CR	41.08	17	2.73	3	p=.43515
C + S + CR + PR x CR	6.68	8	11.02	6	p=.08776
C + S + PR + CR + (PR=CR versus PR = CR)	9.28	13	8.42	1	p=.00371

Appendix C

Statement by Professor Herbert Walberg
Department of Education
University of Illinois at Chicago
March 26, 1990

I have advised staff and consultants from Designs for Change as they prepared the study "Chicago Principals: Changing of the Guard," particularly concerning the analysis of the impact of various factors on the decision to retain or not retain principals. The analytical methods described in Appendix B are appropriate for the questions being investigated. The findings presented in Section 3 concerning the statistical association of various factors with the likelihood of principal retention are justified by the data analysis that was carried out.